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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 SINGAPORE 002046

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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STATE FOR A/S McMURRAY
BANGKOK FOR JIM WALLER
STATE PASS USTR FOR AUSTR LINSCOTT, AUSTR WEISEL, AND
DAUSTR BELL
EPA FOR MARK KASMAN
NOAA FOR MATTHEW STRICKLER
MARAD FOR BRIAN VARNEY

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: SENV ETRD ECON PREL SN
SUBJECT: USG AND GOS CONCLUDE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW, DISCUSS
NEXT STEPS

REF: A. SINGAPORE 1883

1B. SINGAPORE 1946
1C. SINGAPORE 996

11. (SBU) Summary: Regional environmental initiatives, "green" technologies, and reducing air and water pollution were high on the list of future activities discussed during a biennial review of the U.S. - Singapore Free Trade Agreement's Memorandum of Intent (MOI) for Cooperation on Environmental Matters. The two sides identified three principal accomplishments from the MOI's initial 2005-2007 Plan of Action (POA) and adopted a new POA for 2008-2010, which includes seven specific activities. The United States urged Singapore to join a proposed regional dialogue on illegal logging. Singapore expressed new concerns about implementing language in the POA related to identifying performance indicators for cooperative programs. The GOS again probed for some flexibility in U.S. law that might allow Singapore to export endangered arowana fish to the United States and were advised to take up the issue with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. End summary.

12. (SBU) Assistant Secretary for Oceans, Environment, and Science Claudia McMurray and Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources (MEWR) Rosa Daniel met in Singapore on October 30 to evaluate the accomplishments of the 2005-2007 Plan of Action (POA) and adopt a new POA covering 2008-2010, which proposes several joint initiatives.

They were joined by Assistant U.S. Trade Representative (AUSTR) Mark Linscott, as well as OES and post representatives. In addition to MEWR, the Singapore delegation comprised officials from:

--Public Utilities Board (PUB)
--National Environment Agency (NEA)
--Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI)
--Maritime and Port Authority (MPA) and
--Agri-food and Veterinary Authority (AVA).

A/S McMurray also visited a water conservation project and an animal rescue center, delivered remarks at a workshop to identify endangered ramin wood, and met with GOS checkpoints officials. She concluded her visit with an interview with

the Straits Times. AUSTR Linscott met separately with MTI officials to discuss environmental initiatives under the World Trade Organization (WTO), the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali, and the proposed regional dialogue on illegal logging.

Past Accomplishments

¶3. (SBU) A/S McMurray and Deputy Secretary Daniel highlighted three accomplishments under the 2005-2007 Memorandum of Intent's Plan of Action, which outlines mutually identified goals and suggests mechanisms for achieving them.

--Sustainable Cities Program: Several U.S. experts and states participated in the Singapore-led Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Environmentally Sustainable Cities Program.

--Climate and Energy: A GOS delegation visited the United States to exchange ideas with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) officials about greenhouse gas mitigation and energy conservation.

--Combating Illegal Trade: The United States and Singapore co-hosted a workshop in Singapore to train port inspectors and customs officials from the region to identify illegal shipments of endangered ramin wood.

Although not recognized as an accomplishment under the MOI, Singapore also noted that the American Waterworks Association and the GOS had signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together to improve the state of water-related technologies.

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The 2008-2010 Plan of Action

¶4. (SBU) The two delegations also adopted a revised POA for 2008-2010. Both sides expressed interest in developing new ways to advance our environmental cooperation and suggested the following areas for collaboration:

--Air Pollution Control: Singapore proposed technical exchanges on air quality management, use of cleaner fuels for transportation and industry, and emissions monitoring (especially for fine particulate matter).

--Water Safety and Management: On behalf of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) A/S McMurray offered to work with Singapore to develop an Integrated Watershed Management (IWRM) plan designed to control or eliminate marine degradation from land-based activities.

--Energy Efficient Laboratories: Singapore proposed collaborating with the U.S. EPA and Department of Energy (DOE) under the Laboratories for the 21st Century (Labs21) program to improve laboratory design to increase energy efficiency. A/S McMurray welcomed Singaporean experts to visit U.S. labs.

--Terrain Decontamination: Singapore proposed sending a group from its National Environment Agency (NEA) to the United States to gain insights from the U.S. EPA in the area of terrain decontamination after a chemical, biological or radiological incident.

--Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Enforcement and Illegal Logging: Both A/S McMurray and AUSTR Linscott raised increased participation in bilateral and multilateral initiatives and urged Singapore to support a USTR-led regional dialogue on illegal logging and associated trade (Ref A). A/S McMurray

told Deputy Secretary Daniel that the United States is working with origin and destination countries and would like to involve Singapore due to its importance as a transshipment hub. AUSTR Linscott explained that the USG was engaging China on the issue under our Strategic Economic Dialogue. He noted that we had already signed an MOU on illegal logging with Indonesia and were discussing something similar with Malaysia. Deputy Secretary Daniel thanked A/S McMurray and AUSTR Linscott for the update. The two delegations also agreed to cooperate to improve the capacity of Southeast Asian countries to implement and enforce their environmental laws.

--International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) Annex 1: The United States proposed convening a workshop involving the U.S. Department of Justice and relevant Singapore agencies to exchange information and share methods to detect and deter illegal discharge of oil by ships.

--MARPOL Annex 6: A/S McMurray urged Singapore to support the formation of a Pacific Ports Initiative (PPI) in conjunction with the U.S. EPA and Maritime Administration (MARAD). The PPI is intended to bring together major ports, terminal operators, shipping lines, etc. with the aim of reducing air pollution and other adverse effects of maritime shipping and port operations. A/S McMurray offered to provide the GOS with additional information concerning the Pacific Northwest Ports Project involving Seattle, Tacoma, and Vancouver.

--Benchmarks: Deputy Secretary Daniel expressed reservations about a U.S. proposal to strengthen the POA's "Benchmarks" language, saying that it was often difficult to quantify achievements. A/S McMurray acknowledged it could be a challenging process but stressed the importance of measuring progress. Both sides agreed to further discussions on the

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issue sometime in the near future.

Additional Issues

15. (SBU) In addition to the POA, the delegations discussed:

--Singapore International Water Week: Deputy Secretary Daniel said that the GOS was interested in collaborating with the USG and private U.S. companies on the inaugural International Water Week (IWW) in June 2008. IWW will showcase water technologies aimed at both developed and developing nations. A/S McMurray suggested that several U.S. companies and foundations would likely be interested in participating.

--Asian Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Network (AECEN): Both sides agreed to clarify their participation in AECEN, a group formed in 2005 to promote the regional exchange of best environmental practices.

--Arowana: The GOS asked about possible flexibility in U.S. law that would allow Singapore companies to export arowana fish to the United States. A/S McMurray recommended that the GOS engage the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to directly explore what options, if any, might be available for importation of this endangered species.

Public Participation

16. (SBU) At the USG's invitation, a representative from the non-governmental organization TRAFFIC delivered a short presentation about his organization's collaborative activities with Singapore, which are often funded by the USG. He highlighted training and capacity building efforts such as a recent species identification workshop held in Singapore

and regional workshops to encourage interagency cooperation on interdicting illegally traded wildlife. Singapore is a leading participant in the ASEAN-Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN), and has an opportunity to set best practices for wildlife trade management, he said. The TRAFFIC representative encouraged Singapore's participation in the Coalition Against Wildlife Trafficking, which currently comprises five member countries, including the United States.

Deputy Secretary Daniel said the GOS shares TRAFFIC's concerns.

Other Activities

¶7. (U) Following the review, A/S McMurray visited Singapore's Marina Barrage Project where the Public Utilities Board (PUB) delivered an overview of the Active, Beautiful, and Clean (ABC) Campaign. Once complete, the Marina Barrage will separate the Singapore and Kallang rivers from the ocean, creating Singapore's largest freshwater reservoir. The GOS is constructing a visitor center at the Barrage to highlight the importance of water conservation and Singapore's efforts in sustainable development. ABC is Singapore's master plan to revitalize its waterways and bring its citizens close to the source of their drinking water in the hopes they will keep it free from trash and other pollutants.

¶8. (SBU) A/S McMurray met with the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) to learn more about how it monitors the flow of cargo into and out of Singapore and screens for contraband such as illegal wildlife and wildlife products.

¶9. (SBU) A/S McMurray on October 31 delivered remarks at the U.S.-Singapore co-hosted Ramin Identification Workshop. The workshop brought together port inspectors and customs officials from Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and China. Trainers offered the officials instruction and provided basic tools to help them distinguish endangered ramin species from

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other woods that passes through their jurisdictions. During the October 30 review, AVA officials expressed appreciation for the workshop and noted that they had yet to seize any illegal shipments of ramin.

¶10. (U) A/S McMurray visited the ACRES Wildlife Rescue Center, which is scheduled to open by the end of 2007. ACRES, a local non-governmental organization, is constructing the center through private donations and grants. Once completed, the center will serve as an educational facility as well as a sanctuary for animals rescued from the illegal wildlife trade.

¶11. (U) A/S McMurray and AUSTR Linscott cleared this message.

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